

Church Architecture Lecture on April 13

Polegreen Foundation, as part of the Consortium for Richmond's Religious History, is pleased to sponsor an illustrated lecture by noted church architect James DePasquale. Titled *A Celebration of Richmond's Historic Houses of Worship: Reclaiming the Ecclesiastical*, the talk will examine the definition of "church" and its evolving history as explored in its architecture. Case studies of Richmond's historic Congregation Beth Ahabah, Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church, and Cathedral of the Sacred Heart will be examined to then establish the question: What is the Church of the 21st Century?...a Warehouse of People—or a Sacred Space That Inspires Spirituality?

*Jim DePasquale received The Distinguished Achievement Award from the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects in 1995. Specializing in church design for 30 years, Jim's firm—**Depasquale-Gentilhomme Group**—is noted for its commitment to creating architecture that speaks to spiritual, social and physical needs.*

Join us at First Baptist Church at 2709 Monument Avenue and Boulevard in Richmond on Friday, April 13 at 7:00 pm. Cost is \$10 and includes a private reception at the Virginia Center for Architecture just one block away after the lecture. The bookstore and exhibit Growing Country, *Growing Needs: Federal Architecture and Art* will be open.

This promises to be a fascinating exploration of how religious architecture fulfills its role in the community. Call 261.3837 for more information or log onto www.historicpolegreen.org.

From the Executive Director, *continued from page 2*

www.virginia.org and other Trail members' sites. Joint brochures are being developed and in time, tourists will also be able to access them at state rest stops and hotels in partnership with the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association.

With activity all around, fundraising is a necessary concern that requires our attention and your support. Initial efforts have included continued grant applications as well as hosting the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Richmond District representative who is responsible for assessing federal highway grant requests. Leadership Metro Richmond was also contacted in hopes of developing a strategic partnership between our two organizations for development of a comprehensive development strategy. Finally, steps were taken to triple our Annual Fund database and improve the

organization's branding and image. So far responses have been sound.

This Foundation will continue to prosper with proper structure. Our progress must include streamlining measures and other efficiencies which may mean changes to the status quo. These opportunities abound and I am resolved to taking this organization to the next level. Patrick Henry said "I like dreams of the future better than the history of the past." Right before our eyes, we behold the manifestation of Dr. Bluford's dream of a resurrected Polegreen and our future potential is impressive.

Sincerely,
Christopher K. Peace
Executive Director

Historic Polegreen Church Foundation
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The News from Historic Polegreen Church Foundation

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Preserving Virginia's contributions to America's religious freedom

Polegreen Takes Lead on Legislation Creating a New History Trail

On January 22, House Bill #1722 was passed by the House of Delegates unanimously; on the 13th of February the Senate did the same. With its adoption, "An Act to Establish The Road to Revolution Heritage Trail" sets the stage for a project that brings together seven historical and governmental organizations to pay homage to Patrick Henry's leading role in liberating Virginia from colonial rule to independence.

St. John's Church in Richmond, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, owners of Scotchtown and Studley in Hanover County, Hanover Tavern, Hanover County, guardians of the county's significant colonial courthouse, Historic Polegreen Church Foundation, Red Hill Plantation-Patrick Henry National Memorial at Brookneal, Virginia, and Hampden-Sydney College are the organizations that will develop the trail. The Virginia Tourism Corporation, the state's Division of Historical Resources and the National Park Service, owner of Rural Plains, will also contribute to the effort. Pine Slash, the archaeological site of Henry's honeymoon cottage, currently in private hands, will also be on the trail.

The legislation was sponsored by Chris Peace, who is the Delegate of the 97th District. "As a native of Hanover County, I am pleased to contribute to the memory of our first Governor, Patrick Henry, as well as contribute to the joint marketing and economic development efforts of our area. We have a rich heritage and we need to collab-

orate and find creative opportunities for promoting these valuable resources," stated Peace.

Polegreen's story is an important element of Henry's development. An impressive young Patrick was often brought to Polegreen Church to hear and experience Presbyterian minister Samuel Davies' sermons. Those services apparently had a profound effect on him. Late in life he commented to his biographer William Wirt that Davies "taught him what an orator should be."

Planning is currently underway to develop roadside signage, brochures, a web site and

other marketing materials to help history fans navigate around the many sites in central Virginia associated with Henry. Once the scope of the project is determined and a set of historical and marketing criteria are established, the Trail consortium will begin to develop these tools for the public's use. "The success of the Civil War Trails (www.civilwartrails.org) and other niche trails such as the Blue Ridge Music Trails Project (www.blueridgemusic.org) confirm to us the popularity of this form of collaboration," said Mark Howell, project manager.

Should the trail prove to be as popular as we think it can be, the Patrick Henry element could very well become the first of several other "loops" that expand on other persons or themes related to the American Revolution in Virginia.

Stay tuned.



From the Executive Director



During the past six months, the Polegreen Foundation has taken deliberate steps to address the issue of sustainability and to move the organization forward. I am grateful for the trust placed in me to ignite initiatives through the Foundation's strategic plan. To achieve our goals, we must place special emphasis on enhancing our public profile and continued development of both on-site and off-site attractions. Securing our future means capitalizing now on our resources. Now let me spark your imagination with an overview our recent work.

An initial advancement and success is the establishment of the Road to Revolution State Heritage Trail. This project is very exciting! In the three months leading up to General Assembly Session I met with representatives of potential member organizations, the Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Tourism Corporation and area legislators to gain their commitment to the project. Statistics show thematic offerings double overall visitation to sites.

Programming, like the Trail, is integral to furthering our mission. This year will include a spring ceremonial groundbreak-

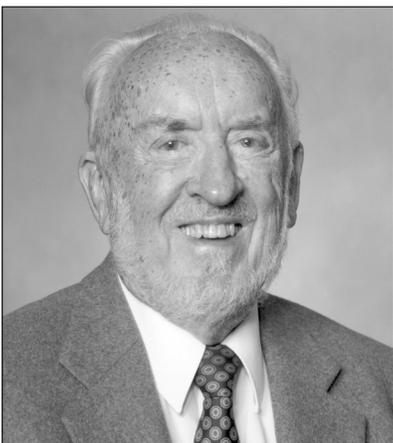
ing, a ribbon cutting ceremony highlighting our exciting site enhancements, a Civil War encampment featuring period music, a fall symposium concerning religious freedom and plans for a December grand illumination at the historic site. Please talk to your friends and colleagues about our activities, encourage them to attend and become a part of our mission.

I will continue efforts to enhance the organization's public profile. With a background in public affairs and relations, I initiated a campaign to engage the media and educate community leaders about Polegreen and upgrade our Annual Fund drive. Additional opportunities remain but recently six articles referencing Polegreen have appeared in metro area papers. A media tour is in the works to visit various regional outlets.

Our marketing efforts are also moving forward. We are taking steps to create a short promotional film to use for educational and development purposes. A Richmond filmmaker will edit snippets from existing footage from Colonial Williamsburg and PBS films as well as add new features to tell the Polegreen story. Polegreen will also unveil a retooled web site which will be linked to

continued, page 6

From the President



For those who have been following the story of Polegreen's resurgence over the last seventeen years, the present events shaping up at the historic site in Hanover County will certainly generate feelings of excitement and anticipation.



Many of you have looked forward to our giving greater interest and energy to the physical enhancement of the historic site. We are now engaged in just that. Our Board of Directors has been working with our architect, Carlton Abbott of Williamsburg, developing a plan to make our site an attractive destination as well as a visitor-friendly place. While the master plan for our project will need further time and financial resources to become a reality, many elements can be done now that will add greatly to what is there and meld into the master plan.

Over the next several months visitors and passersby will notice several hundred feet of vintage fencing, an improved parking area, a small weatherproof lounge and display room with restroom facilities, a lighted church structure and ultimately a flag pole and time line walkway from the parking lot leading guests to the church. The time line will highlight the human story for religious freedom.

We continue to be very grateful for your interest and support and covet your prayers as we move forward. May a gracious Providence guide us all the way.

Sincerely,
Robert Bluford, Jr.
President

Historic Polegreen Church Foundation is proud to participate in the Consortium for Richmond's Religious History. Our partners are:

A More Perfect Union: A More Perfect Union is a collaborative human rights organization that combats bias against Arab and South Asian cultural and religious communities in Virginia.

Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives: The purpose of the museum and archives is the collection, preservation and exhibition of materials related to the Richmond Jewish community and the historic congregations of Beth Shalome and Beth Ahabah.

Council for America's First Freedom: The Council provides educational programs and information about religious freedom as an American historical development, as a contemporary controversy and as an international human right.

Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond: An organization of 21 different religious denominations in the Richmond region whose purpose is to develop understanding, respect and cooperation among the various religious faiths.

Museum of Virginia Catholic History: The Museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving and exhibiting artifacts that interpret the history and traditions of Catholicism in Virginia and serves as an educational resource for the Diocesan community and the general public.

St. John's Church: St. John's is an active parish church in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. It has the distinction of being the meeting place for the 2nd Virginia Convention, an extra legal body called in the late colonial period where Patrick Henry delivered his "Give me liberty or give me death" speech. St. John's maintains a year-round interpretive program for the public to preserve and present the church's history and importance.

Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church: The church is one of Virginia's most historic African-American congregations. Founded in 1867 by the renowned John Jasper, Sixth Mount Zion's history is woven into the fabric of Virginia. The church promotes tourism in Virginia through historic preservation activities and networking with organizations of similar interests.

Soka Gakkai: Soka Gakkai is an American Buddhist association that promotes world peace and individual happiness based on the teachings of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism. Their members reflect a cross section of our diverse American society representing a broad range of ethnic and social backgrounds.

Virginia Baptist Historical Society: Founded in 1876, the Virginia Baptist Historical Society is the oldest and largest Baptist historical organization in the South. It collects, preserves and shares Baptist historical information and maintains a Heritage Gallery, library and archives.

A Warm Thanks to Our Contributors

Over 80 families and organizations supported Polegreen with their financial support this past year. Without your thoughtful gifts the preservation of the site and programs about religious liberty would simply not be possible. Following is a list of our 2006 contributors and even a few who have gotten an early start on 2007. * indicates donors to the 2006 Annual Fund Drive

Samuel Davies Society - \$2,501+

Mr. Harry Bluford
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Mr. Richard Barrett
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The Foundation has made every effort to recognize and record all gifts accurately. List reflects all gifts made in 2006 and through March 2007. If we have made an error in reporting your contribution, please contact us at 804.261.3837 and we will correct it immediately.

Upcoming Programs

The Rise and Demise of Polegreen Church

Come visit the Polegreen Church site on Rural Point Road in Hanover County, Virginia, on Saturday, May 19, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm to explore this place's noble beginnings and dastardly demise. Not many people know it, but Polegreen rests squarely on hallowed ground twice honored: it served as a key rallying point for Virginians dissatisfied with the colony's Established Church. It was also an important battlefield in the campaign leading up to the Confederacy's ultimate ruin.

Civil War re-enactors will encamp on the site and provide military demonstrations, music and presentations throughout the day. Tours of the church site, the white frame memorial, and an examination of the vital history of this place will also be



Members of the Independent Volunteer Rifles will muster at Polegreen on May 19.

offered. Refreshments will also be provided for parched visitors.

We invite you to take this opportunity to come out and enjoy a wonderful spring day and learn just how this unassuming parcel of land was so important in the destiny of our nation.

Polegreen Church site is located on Rural Point Road in Mechanicsville, northeast of Richmond. To reach the site, take exit 38A off of Interstate 295 and drive 2 miles north on Polegreen Road. Turn left onto Rural Point Road and drive $\frac{3}{10}$ mile. The site will be on your right.

Visit www.historicpolegreen.org to see a list of events or call 261.3837 for more information.

Your Opportunity to Reaffirm Religious Freedom



In our last issue we introduced you to the formation of the Consortium for Richmonds Religious History, a group of like-minded organizations and churches dedicated to the preservation of the region's religious heritage.

For its inaugural event the group is circulating a petition reaffirming religious freedom and encouraging local churches, civic and social organizations to sponsor its signing. The petition is accompanied by a reprint of the Statute for Religious Freedom, the act passed by the General Assembly

in 1786 guaranteeing religious liberty in the new state. The consortium hopes to garner 15,000 signatures before the petition is presented to the government next January 16, 2008, the statute's 222nd anniversary.

If you are in a position to encourage a church or organization to sponsor a signing, contact Polegreen offices at 261.3837, our Executive Director at polegreen@gmail.com or visit us at www.historicpolegreen.org. We will be more than happy to give you the particulars. This is a great way to participate in the statewide commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Virginia.

A list of the consortium's members appears on page 5.

To read Thomas Jefferson's text of the Statute for Religious Freedom, go to www.historicpolegreen.org and click on "Links."

Polegreen Welcomes Three New Board Members . . . and Says Goodbye to Three

Polegreen has been blessed with dedicated, committed leadership ever since the Presbytery of the James offered President Bob Bluford the three and one-half-acre lot the historic church once graced. Rotating off the Polegreen Board this year are three persons who provided vision and counsel at a time when the Foundation needed it most. **Dick Beadles, Vashti Davie-Taylor and Jack Sadler:** you will be missed. Mr. Beadles has graciously agreed to remain in an advisory capacity on our real estate / land committee.

Joining the Board this year are three very accomplished persons who bring a wealth of experience to the governance and future of Polegreen. **Virgie M. Binford** has earned degrees from Virginia State University, V.P.I. and New Hope Bible Crusade College and Seminary in Baltimore, MD. Her work experiences include 37 years in the Richmond Public Schools as a teacher, supervisor and program director. She served as an adjunct faculty member in the School of Education at Virginia Union University and was employed by the Department of Education in the U.S. Virgin Islands where she served as Federal Programs Monitor in 1988-1989. Presently, she serves as an adjunct faculty member at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Richmond, VA. She also finds time to volunteer with over 15 organizations and associations.

Dave Fuller is an Economic Developer for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has extensive economic and communi-

ty development experience in regional public education, public safety, social services, comprehensive planning and government affairs. He is an officer and board member of several local and state-wide associations and serves as an Examiner for the US Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia. He served as a Trustee of Virginia's Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership and as a Commissioner for the Virginia Senate's Commission for Excellence and Accountability in Education. He was a founding director of the Hanover Education Foundation.

Hugh Gouldthorpe, Jr.'s, business card reads "head cheerleader," a title he contends better describes his role at Owens & Minor than the official one: Senior Vice President of Quality and Communications. Prior to working for Owens and Minor—the nation's largest supplier of medical and surgical supplies—"Goldie" spent over 20 years at Squibb Corporation. He is a gifted motivational speaker, writer and teacher. He serves on several boards in the area, including one of our partner organizations, the Council for America's First Freedom, and chairs the Richmond Police Foundation. He is a graduate of VMI and attends 2nd Presbyterian Church in Richmond.

Those of us already pursuing the mission of Polegreen are very pleased to be joined by such august colleagues. Welcome!

Your Support is Needed

As the articles and letters in this newsletter attest, there is much happening at Polegreen these days. It is all the result of a committed staff, board and small band of volunteers. As our efforts continue we will need even more support, both in time, talent and treasure. Please help us get the Polegreen story out in the metro Richmond community.

Your tax-deductible contribution will help us preserve and enhance the site as well as develop educational programs recounting the evolution of religious freedom in America.

Your gift of time will help us keep our records updated, the grass mowed and the research organized.

Yes, please accept my gift to preserve Polegreen and to help develop educational programs celebrating its significance in the history of religious freedom in America.

I would like to help Polegreen as a volunteer. Please contact me with the possibilities!

My gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Please contact me regarding a tax-wise gift of securities or estate planning.

Those participating in the Patrick Henry and Polegreen Societies will receive an autographed copy of Dr. Bluford's Davies biography *Living on the Borders of Eternity* in addition to special recognition at this year's events. Samuel Davies Society gift members received the same plus an opportunity for a personal tour of the site with Dr. Bluford.

<input type="checkbox"/> Samuel Davies Society	\$2,501 +	<input type="checkbox"/> Samuel Morris Society	\$501 - \$750
<input type="checkbox"/> Polegreen Church Society	\$1,001 - \$2,500	<input type="checkbox"/> Sarah Henry Society	\$101 - \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Patrick Henry Society	\$751 - \$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Contributor	up to \$100

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